BACKGROUND

The Auckland University Students Association (AUSA) is committed to representing and advocating for students at the University of Auckland as well as providing an extensive range of services for the wider student community. This role extends to the sphere of student transport, including bike travel.

In August 2014, the Environmental Affairs portfolio developed and promoted a ‘Bike to Uni Survey’ to gain insight into the needs of the community of students (and staff) who ride bikes to university.

The online survey was well received by the university community, with 106 bone fide respondents over the month it was open to respondents. (Three “troll” responses were not included in this analysis.) The demographic composition of the respondents was fairly representative of the university population with:

- equal number of male and female respondents
- 80% student respondents, 13% staff (7% student & staff)
- a majority (93%) from the city campus (two from Epsom, four from Grafton)

This report summarises the results of the Bike to Uni survey, highlighting key themes identified by respondents and concluding with priority recommendations drawn from the survey responses. It follows the structure of the survey, focusing on the same three areas; parking facilities, security and repair facilities. There are two additional categories covering “advocacy & resources” and “safety” at the end which summarise information volunteered by respondents. The report is forward-focused with the hope that the recommendations taken from participant feedback in this survey will inform future plans of AUSA, the university administration and Auckland Transport for improving bike infrastructure in and around the University of Auckland campus.

RESULTS

PARKING FACILITIES

A majority of respondents ranked the level of bike parking facilities at the University of Auckland as adequate or poor.

![Graph showing responses to the question 'Which level best describes bike parking facilities at your campus?']

In response to the question “What improvements/changes to bike parking facilities would you like to see at your campus?” several key themes emerged.

1. More Bike Parking

Respondents identified various areas around the city campus where there is currently an inadequate level of bike parking facilities.

‘No bike parking at the lower end of Architecture/Engineering. Leave bike by Business school, but only handful of parks.’ (UoA male student, city campus)

Locations specified by respondents as needing more parks included:

- Law school/Waterloo Quadrant/Eden Cres/Short St
- Kenneth Meyers Centre (currently no parking)
- Arts area
- HSB
- Clocktower
- Library
- Science block
- Owen G Glen (Several respondents noted that with the Grafton Gully cycleway opening, there will be an even greater demand for parking facilities there with an in-
crease in bike riders entering from this direction)

- Symonds St (one respondent noted inadequate staff bike parking at 49 Symonds St)

Collectively, respondents identified almost all of the city campus as needing more bike parking.

2. Different types of parking structures

About half the respondents commented on the fact that much of the parking infrastructure at the university is incompatible with many standard locks.

‘single post bike racks around 300 sector (and much of rest of uni) are very poor — many standard locks do not fit through the loop provided. These should all be replaced with rows of half-Sheffields.’

(UoA male staff member, city campus)

U/D-locks (see figure 2) are widely recognised as one of the safest types of locks, however the brackets on the Rec centre and HSB quad bike stands (figure 3) are often too small or too low on the post to accommodate the larger D-locks. Only smaller chains can be used on these stands which, one respondent noted, is less secure.

‘The current bike parking facilities (sic) don’t accommodate for D locks, which are the safest, if I was to use my D lock then I could only lock up a wheel, which would leave my frame (the valuable part of a bike) vulnerable. I have to lock my bike to street posts.’

(UoA female student, city campus)

The wheel hoop parking facilities (figure 4) were also avoided because respondents could only attach the D-lock to one bike wheel leaving the bike frame vulnerable to theft. Unsuitable parking infrastructure forces students to attach their bikes to railings or lamp posts instead.

FIG 2. EXAMPLE OF A ‘D LOCK’ WHICH IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH SOME OF THE CURRENT BIKE PARKING INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

FIG 3. EXAMPLE OF THE BIKE STANDS LOCATED OUTSIDE THE REC CENTRE AND HSB WHICH ARE INCOMPATIBLE WITH D-LOCKS.

FIG 4. EXAMPLE OF WHEEL HOOP STANDS LOCATED OUTSIDE THE REC CENTRE WHICH ARE INCOMPATIBLE WITH D-LOCKS.
3. More covered bike parking

28% of participants wanted more covered bike parking areas. This was the improvement most commonly suggested by respondents.

‘covered bike parking so our bikes don’t get soaked in the rain.’ (UoA male student, city campus)

‘More sheltered bike racks (wet bums aren’t fun!)’ (UoA female student, city campus)

One respondent commended the parking area at the architecture buildings which is covered (figure 5).

‘The architecture and planning faculty has good, undercover parking for bikes.’ (UoA female student, city campus)

4. Signposting & campus maps of bike parking locations

Several respondents noted that it would be helpful to have bike parking areas well signposted, with maps around campus showing the location of bike parking, repair facilities, showers and changing rooms.

‘it would be great to have [covered bike parking facilities] better signposted and or marked on capus (sic) maps so students know where they all are.’ (UoA female staff member, Epsom campus)

SECURITY

A majority of respondents rated bike security as poor or adequate (figure 6).

FIG 6. RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION ‘WHICH LEVEL BEST DESCRIBES BIKE SECURITY AT YOUR CAMPUS?’

There was a divide in responses to the question “What improvements/changes to bike security would you like to see at your campus?” Predictably, many of those who had never had any security issues felt that security wasn’t an issue on campus whereas those who had had their bike stolen or their locks tampered with (or had friends who had) felt that security was lacking and needed improvement. When asked about which factors stop people from riding their bikes to university more often, 23% of respondents ticked ‘Concerned that my bike might get stolen.’ Popular suggestions for improving bike security from those who felt it was an issue included:

1. Cages with swipcard access

This was the most popular suggestion for improving security on campus.

‘It would be great to have more bicycle parking areas around university which are only accessible with a student ID or other university swipe card.’ (UoA female student, city campus)

Those who used the system said it worked well, but that there needed to be more cages or bike lockers around the campus.

2. Surveillance & lighting

A majority of participants felt that there was a need for greater surveillance of bike parking. Many advocated for a stronger presence of university security guards.

‘Bike parks need to be installed...on ‘the beat’ of Uni security personnel’ (UoA female staff member, city campus)

However there was mixed feeling amongst respondents as to the efficacy of cameras. While many felt that more
cameras and more signage about the presence of cameras would reduce theft, others took a different position.

‘I don’t know if cameras and such are the option - that kind of ‘Big Brother’ mentality doesn’t solve the root cause of the problem. We just need to promote a safe and caring environment where bike stealing just does not happen / would be unthinkable.’ (UoA female student, city campus)

Several respondents suggested that better lighting around bike racks would also help reduce theft.

3. University assistance with bike theft

Some respondents felt that the university was not helpful in the event of their bike being stolen.

‘Had my bike stolen, no security cameras or help from university.’ (UoA male student, city campus)

REPAIR FACILITIES

82% of respondents reported that there were no bike repair facilities available to them on their campus (figure 6).

In response to the question “What improvements/changes to bike repair facilities would you like to see at your campus?” several key themes emerged.

1. Free air pump and oil

The most common request from respondents was that bike pumps and oil be purchased by the university and made freely available to students and staff.

‘Perhaps the rec centre could loan out a pump’ (UoA female staff member, city campus.)

‘Free oil, lube, tire air!’ (UoA male student, city campus)

Some suggested locations for free bike pumps/oil included:

- Permanently attached inside all bike cages
- Permanently attached near all larger bike parking areas
- Rec centre reception
- AUSA reception
- Campus store reception

2. Bike repair equipment sold on campus

Respondents wanted low-cost purchasable items for bike repairs available from retailers on campus. Products included locks, inner tubes, reflectors, lights, batteries and repair kits. Various options were suggested for purchasing these products including from Munchy Mart, AUSA reception, the Campus store or from a bike gear vending machine (figure 8).

‘A vending machine/ open late place to purchase bike locks, inner tubes, patch kits, lights and batteries, and reflectors.’ (UoA female student, city campus).

3. Bike repair station/workshop

Many respondents wanted bike repair stations to provide free and easy access to high cost/heavy equipment like
bike pumps, allan keys, screw drivers and spanners.

‘A bike repair station...on campus would be great’
(UoA male staff member, city campus)

While some respondents were evidently confident enough to fix their own bikes provided that the tools were available, others were not and suggested some kind of free repair service associated with a bike repair station.

‘One basic area...where we can take our bikes and get them checked up for all the basics would be great too - perhaps it could be a ‘Popup Fix Your Bike” thing that happens once a week outside General Library or similar. I know next to nothing about fixing my own bike so I would love to also have somewhere / someone I could go to in this pop-up bike fixing thing and ask one-on-one for a lesson.’
(UoA female student, city campus)

Another suggestion was a more permanent workshop space with tools available for students to help each other on their repairs.

‘A workshop space where students can help each other fix their bikes would also be amazing! Some people couldn’t change an inner tube and that would provide a space for cycle education and safety.’
(UoA female student, city campus)

4. Student Bike Repair Shop

Some respondents saw potential in having a bike repair shop on campus as a place to get repairs done cheaply, and as a training location for apprentice bike mechanics.

‘I come from a uni where there was a permanent bike shop on campus that had student mechanics and fixed basic issues inexpensively and on the fly. This was an amazing resource that I desperately miss.’
(UoA female staff member, city campus)

‘Ooh, some sort of partnership with bike apprentice-ships/bike shops where students can offer up their bikes as guinea pigs for people needing to learn how to fix/build bikes?? That would be mean.’
(UoA female student, city campus)

ADVOCACY & RESOURCES

Although this category was not a focus of the survey, the suggestions volunteered by respondents in this area have been included. Several respondents wanted to see the university advocating for commuting by bike.

‘More encouragement to cycle.’
(UoA male student, city campus)

Having free ‘student guides to biking’ was seen as one way of encouraging safe cycling around campus.

‘little ‘handbooks’ or ‘guides’ for uni students would be good ...alongside a list of where cheapest places to go if we ever need a repair or further add-on equipment etc is.’
(UoA student, city campus, female)

SAFETY

Several respondents also noted a significant safety issue pertaining to bike access to the Rec centre bike parking from Symonds St.

‘There needs to be an off-ramp for cyclists to exit symonds street. often it is quite dangerous to stop near the rec centre when there are cars (particularly at peak hour traffic)’
(UoA student, city campus, male)

Many students cycle down Symonds St and exit onto the footpath by the Rec centre to park their bike. There are two options for exiting the road. The first is the traffic light crossing. Often students fill this area waiting to cross, so more often bike rider takes the next access point; an access way designed for cars, just beneath the traffic light crossing (figure 9, arrow).

This layout is hazardous in two ways. Firstly, the angle to exit at either the pedestrian crossing or at the raised curb is sharp, often with many pedestrians around, requiring the bike rider to slow right down before they exit the road onto the footpath. Traffic travels fast down Symonds St, and slowing down at this thoroughfare puts people who ride bikes in a dangerous position.

‘Feel unsafe on roads, There is no safe way to enter campus from Symonds.’
(UoA female staff member, city campus)
This hazard is amplified by the raised curb of the second access point. 27% of respondents ride road bikes to university. These usually have narrow tyres with poor tread. Unless you slow right down or bounce the front wheel up as you exit, the front wheel is likely to get caught on the side of the raised ledge and skid along with the rider thrown off the bike, potentially into the stream of traffic. This danger is compounded in the wet.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

PARKING FACILITIES

1. More Bike parking

Extending the half-Sheffield bike parking along the road side edge of OGGB. There is plenty of space, and this is well placed to accommodate the greater number of cyclists entering campus from the new Grafton Gully university exit.

FIGURE 10. CURRENT BIKE PARKING BETWEEN OGGB AND GRAFTON ROAD WITH RED ARROW SHOWING WHERE BIKE PARKING CAN BE EXTENDED.

2. Different types of parking structures

Ensuring that each bike parking location provides a mixture of infrastructure types to accommodate all kinds of locks, including D-locks. Several respondents reported that half Sheffield bike stands were the preferred parking infrastructure. In conversations with Auckland Transport cycling representatives it appears that Council has plenty of the half-Sheffield type bike parking available for distribution.

FIG 11 & 12. EXAMPLE OF AN UNUSED, SHELTERED LOCATION IN FRONT OF THE ENGINEERING BUILDING THAT COULD ACCOMMODATE MORE BIKE PARKING.

3. More covered bike parking

Placing more bike parking in places that already offer shelter (figure 11&12) and working with Auckland Transport to build at least one high capacity, sheltered bike storage facility (figure 13).

FIG 13. AN EXAMPLE OF HIGH CAPACITY SHELTERED BIKE PARKING WITH HALF-SHEFFIELD STANDS THAT CAN ACCOMMODATE D/U-LOCKS.

4. More caged bike parking with swipecard access

Few people use the underground walkway beneath Symonds St, between Engineering and Kate Edgar. This could be converted into a large central, sheltered bike cage storage area with swipe card access.

SECURITY

1. Updating university website

Several of the links on the university website are outdated (figure 14 & 15).

FIG 14. SCREENSHOT OF UOA WEBPAGE AFTER SEARCHING “BIKE PARKING.” LINK CIRCLED IN RED IS DEAD.
SAFETY

1. Symonds St Bike Access

Providing a safe access point from Symonds St into the Kate Edgar parking is a top priority for student safety. This could be achieved by either levelling the access point after the rec centre traffic lights on Symonds St or installing a bike lane/exit ramp off Symonds Street onto the footpath just above the traffic light crossing by the Rec centre.

2. University assistance with bike theft

Developing and promoting a strategy to recognise bike theft on campus. Having a database for recording bike theft information such as brand/colour/type of bike (with photo), where the bike was stolen from, what time it was stolen etc. Even if this is not helpful for the particular bike stolen, such information will be useful for informing future strategy to reduce bike theft. Promoting this system will also improve relations between students/staff whose bikes are stolen and campus security.

REPAIR FACILITIES

1. Bike repair stands

Installing several bike repair stands at high-density bike parking areas around the campus. Beside the stairs leading up from Kate Edgar bike parking to quad level is one such location.

2. Stocking bike repair equipment

Working with campus retailers to ensure that bike equipment is available for purchase on campus. As Munchymart is the shop that is open for the longest, this might be the most appropriate retailer. Alternatively, installing a bike repair vending machine, perhaps in the quad, for 24/7 access.

3. Bike repair services

Working with Auckland Transport to provide regular bike repair workshops to students and staff.